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Central Intelligence Agency



## 26 August 1985

The Kurdish Insurgency in Turkey

## Summary

Kurdish extremists appear to have faltered in their effort to create a classic rural insurgency in Turkey's southeastern provinces over the past The Turkish government's military and civil response to the attempted insurgency appears to be effective, factionalism has weakened the insurgents, and crucial sources of foreign support--especially from Iraqi Kurdish leader Barzani--have proved fickle. At this stage, the campaign initiated by the extremists, a group called the Kurdish Workers Party, appears to have degenerated into a combination of terrorism, banditry, and blood-feuding. As such, it does not pose a threat to the Turkish government's control of southeastern Turkey.

This said, however, Kurdish extremism remains likely to pose a threat to Turkish and possibly US interests in Turkey over the next several years. The threat is most likely to take the form of terrorist attacks against Turkish politicians, local government and security officials and installations, US military and contractor

This paper was prepared by  European Analysis. Questions and comments are welcome and John McLaughlin, Chief, Western Europe Divison,	ope Division, Office of may be addressed to	25X1 25X1
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personne facilit	el, and local Turkish petr ies.	o leum
A History of	Kurdish Violence	
1920s and 193 suppressed for including the fed by the hore republic and leaders of the hiatus of alm serious problem.	our separate Kurdish rebel bombing of villages. Ku stility of devout Kurdish the resentment of traditi	lican Government in Ankara lions with military force, rdish rebelliousness was tribesmen to the secular onally autonomous tribal ntral government. After a violence reemerged as a
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	Ankara's Kurdish So	olution
Kurds by supp offering equa and literatur government of of the Kurds they are "mou formal barrie Turkish offic	ressing their cultural ide l opportunity. The teach e is forbidden, and the us	ing of the Kurdish language se of the language in pited. The very existence o is deniedofficially er hand, there are no assimilated Kurds, and of individual Kurds who
of select gro renunciation societyofte power has bee tribe in a pr party. Urban Government's structures.	ice, opportunity and rewar ups. Kurdish elites have of nationalism by assimilan at a high socio-economic portioned out on a tribaction in a ssimilation efforts by brany Kurdish youth born of ies in the west of Turkey	been rewarded for their tion into Turkish level. Local political basis. The strongest the strongest political have contributed to the eaking down tribal parents who have moved to

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Ir	The rise of militant Kurdish autonomy movements in Iran and aqparticularly the struggle of the conservative Iraqi Kurdish	
1 e	ader Mullah Mustafa Barzaniaroused widespread sympathy and	
su of	pport among Turkish Kurds, and contributed to the reappearance unrest among them in the 1960s. The violent movements that	
su	rfaced in the 1970s, however, were the creation of leftist	
to	iversity students and assimilated professionals and owed more Marxism than traditional tribal attitudes.	
	The first separatist groups to appear advocated autonomy	
	for a Turkish "Kurdistan" in federation with a socialist or communist Turkish state.	
	Many other Kurds became directly involved with the mainstream of Turkish terrorism; they probably did not	2
	comprise a majority in these groups	2
	represented in them.	
	The outbreak of the Iran-Iraq war in 1980 lent new impetus	2
to	the Kurdish autonomy movement in Turkey. Both combatants	
at Ex	tempted to weaken their enemy by aiding Kurdish dissidents. tremist Kurds in Turkey benefitted from the burgeoning arms	
fl	ow to Iraqi and Iranian Kurds and from the inability of Iran	
use	I Iraq to police their mountainous borders with Turkey. Iran's of Iraqi Kurdish fighters to spearhead a spring 1983	
of	ensive into northern Iraq created something of a safehaven for dish extremists operating against Turkey and allowed them to	
lai	inch an insurgency last fall.	
Red	ent Developments	
	Over the past year, Kurdish extremists have carried out a	
ser	ies of violent operations in southeastern Turkev.	
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dor	the violence was part of a plan to	
ues	tabilize Turkey's predominantly Kurdish southeast.	25

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	The Kurdish Workers Party (PKK)	
The PKK	is the first significant terrorist group to put	
Kurdish inde	pendence above the goal of a "classless" society in ore the military takeover of 1980, the PKK was active	
in the Kurdi	Sh neighborhoods of Ankara and Izmir and in Turkev's	
the Kurdish	poverished southeast. The PKK has some support in migrant community in Europe, especially in West	
Germany. Oth	ner PKK members were forced into exile elsewhere in the middle East after the 1980 military	
takeover. It	: was widely regarded as the most violent of all	2
Kurdish sepai	ratist groups in Turkey.	•
The PKK	is bitterly opposed to more Marxist Kurdish groups,	
groups report	Inion of the Left, a coalition of Kurdish and leftist edly backed by the Turkish Communist Party. PKK	
attacks agair	st this and other rival groups increased markedly insurgency effort in Turkey ran into problems last	
year.	- This drivery can the problems fast	
The PKK	appears to have links with the Kurdish tribal power	
structure in	the east and rival leftists have accused it of being han a hit squad.	
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The resu	rgance of the DVV which had been discounted to the	
military take	rgence of the PKK, which had been disrupted by the over of September 1980, appears to be in large part	
the result of	support from Iraqi Kurds. Although details are PKK appears to have come to an agreement with Iraqi	
Kurdish dissi	dent leader Masoud Barzani in 1983 to use territory	
under nis con	trol as a base for attacks into Turkey.	
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Foreign Support				25
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Although the PKK has opera Barzani, there is no evide	ited from territo	ry controlle	d by	
of material and weapons as Barzani or some of his all	sistance. Inste	provided larged, it is like	ge amounts kelv that	
members in return for thei	r occasional ass	istance as an	O PKK ^ms	
smugglers and guerrillas. the Iranian-supported Kurd ally of Barzani, may consi exchange. The PKK's secul	- La Callinia I all	7 (u1501-1219	lMi), an	
the Khomeini-snonsored use	a, 13m 13 HOL 106	ologically pa	hters latable to	0.5
will probably not be very	long-lived.	er, and the r	alliance	25
				25
Libya also has sparked ronouncements of solidarit	Ankara's suspic	ion by its fr	requent	
urdistan," most recently involvement, but some of the alestinians probably "tricked dition. Libyan leader or the state of	n mid-April. The aid they provi	essed peoples e Libyans hav de Barzani an rkish groups.	of e denied d the In	
slamic Party, Hizbi Islami Doperated.	with which the	PKK reported	rdish ly has	
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gro car	In the summer of zzen Rizgariye Kur posed of PKK membe	1984 the	044 6			
gro car	posed of PKK membe		PKK forme	d a guerri	lla unit cal	led
car		rs, member	rs of othe	r Kurdish	and leftist	<b>-</b> 
car	ups, and possibly	some Armer	<u>nian</u> terro	rists.		
	ry out "armed prop	aganda" an	nong Turki:	sh Kurds a	e HRK was to nd eventuall:	у
unu	ermine Turkish con	trol of th	ne Kurdish	areas.		Ī
	The HRK began it	s campaigr	on 15 Au	ust 1984	with	
C00	rdinated attacks ag	gainst "Ja	andarma"* i	osts in t	ownship cente	ers
n pre	Siirt and Hakkari   ss reports	provinces.		nat time, the insurg		
cla	shed over thirty t	imes with	Turkish se	curity for	rces: the	
Cla	shes claimed the largents have died a	ives of 56	Turkish s	oldiers.	About 97	2
1113	argents have a lea l	as a resul	c or these	Deratio	15	2
tni	ad +a allu	:	The insurg	ents appe	ar to have	
tri	ed to ally with tropes in Syria and In	ibes navin rau. so as	g close to best to e	mily conne	ctions with	2
log	istics <u>net reachin</u> d	from Tur	key to saf	ehavens a	ross the	
bor	ier.					
	Tactics have incl	luded dire	ct assault	s on Janda	ırma posts,	
amb	ishes of military v liers into ambushes	/ehicles,	strafing o	f Jandarma	a posts to dr	'aw
col	laborators, attacks	on local	Kurdish p	oliticians	and at lea	ıst
one	rocket-propelled glage.	renade (R	PG) attack	against a	"lovalist"	
V 1 1	aye.					
Inte	*"Jandarma" are param ior, but under Turkish	ilitary unit	s formally	subordinate	to the Ministry	of
war,	and have the role of	police in ru	iral Türkey.	during Stat	es of emergency	/ Or
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	The Stalled Insurgency	
	As a result of a concerted Turkish Government response, factionalism within the movement, and an apparent weakening of the PKK's alliance with Barzani, the insurgency appeared to have run aground by spring. A large-scale renewal of rebel attacks the Jandarma had anticipated in late March or April did not	
	insurgent-initiated attack. Recently there have been reports of sporadic attacks by insurgents against security forces and groups of foreigners in the area of Mt. Aranat No. 5000 foreigners in the area of Mt. Aranat No. 5000 foreigners in the area of Mt.	2
	killed in the largely propaganda-motivated actions	
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	Government Response	
	By October 1984, the central government had developed a concerted strategy of military and civic action to meet the	2
Γ	insurgent campaign.	
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1	we believe Turkish forces probably have made several small-scale incursions into Iraq in the past year; one clash with insurgents reportedly occurred on the Iraqi side of the border near	
	onirwan.	2
•	Reports of a series of firefights in late April and May suggested that a long-rumored sweep operation, perhaps on a arge-scale, was underway. These operations may have complicated the insurgents' efforts by intendications in the complex complicated the insurgents' efforts by intendications are complicated.	
_	TO THE WIND STORES OF THE PROPERTY OF ASSESSED ASSESSEDA ASSESSED ASSESSED ASSESSED ASSESSED ASSESSED ASSESSED ASSESSEDA	2
_	etween refuge areas in Iraq and target areas in Turkey.	
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formation of a n	reports ew light infantry	division in the so	the possible outheast, but	
we do not have i	nformation confir	ning this step.		
We believe committed so far	the amount of Turl to the anti-Kurd	kish military resou ish effort is not s	rces ignificant	
enough to affect	Turkey's ability	to fulfill its NAT olved probably are	<b>'0</b> 25	X
which would only	provide indirect	support to NATO. insurgency effort h	It is	
Turkey's already	limited capabilit	ties in certain fie	lds critical	
Turkey's NATO re	sponsibilities. F	out marginal with r		
had been devoted	or mid-May, almost <u>to counter-insur</u> g	all of Turkey's h gency operations in	elicopters support of a	
major "sweep."				
Ankara also of military opera	has undertaken ci ations, including	vic action program the distribution o	s in the area f weapons to	25
"loyal" villages	,			2
	According t	o press reports and	4 11S	
consulate officia	ıls in Adana. civi	lian administrators conomic development	s have	
for the southeast	: initiated by Pri	me Minister Turgut ams will not be see	Ozal.	
decade, the gover	nment's emphasis	on economic develor come change for mar	oment, not	
merely security,	13 probably a wer	come change for mar	ly locals.	
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Finally, the Jandarmaat first ill-trained and poorly	
equippedis now performing better.	
indication that the tide is	
turning in favor of the Jandarma is that insurgents are	
surrendering to security forces conducting sweeps, rather than fighting to the death, as was the case earlier in the campaign.	
<u>Factionalism</u>	
Factionalism within the movement has also greatly weakened the insurgency.	
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for the indefinite future,	
Kurdish extremists will be spending more time struggling against one another than fighting the Turkish Government.	
The another than righting the larkish dovernment.	_ 
In addition to defections and opposition from leftist	۷.
Kurdish groups, the PKK may also be faced with opposition from conservative Kurds who believe the PKK is still too leftist.	

Declinin	ig Support			
<del></del>		tinstrumental	in the PKK's early	
	y have weakened.			
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Fvidence	of Soviet aid f	or Kurdish ext	remists in Turkey is	
sketchy at be		connection to	Kurdish extremism	
trainees in P	alestinian camps	under Syrian	auspices reportedly	
some Turkish	Kurds have come	into contact w	not implausible tha ith Soviet trainers	on
Soviets have	aided the PKK as	an organizati	ful, however, that t on. In fact, we	
believe the U of armed Kurd		inly has good	reason to steer clea	r
*The Barzan erstwhile allies	i family has a hist in Turkey when the	ory of betraying- ir activities ris	-in some cases, murdering k bringing down the wrat	ng ch of
the Turkish Army	on Iraqi Kurdistan	. Even Masoud Ba	rzani, whose sometime restraint, realizes he	
			territory by Turkish	
Nutus.				
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Such i from s	nvolvement w ubstantial S	ould weaken oviet arms	Iraq, who	ich has ben	efitted	
Kurdis in ide	h movements ological vie	are unpredi ws.	ctable and	d wildly un	orthodox	
**	******	*****	*****	******		
Outlook: A P	roto-Insurge	ncy Reverts	to Terror	ism		
If, as sefforts to st violent Kurdiand internecipossibility in Kurdish targe	sh activism on the struggle. s that US per	urgency in will revert A more re	the southe to a patt mote but n	east, we be ern of ter conetheless	lieve rorism real	
US personnel a the central go installations literature ass "colonialist" groundwork for	overnment's p and provinc serts that US regime in Ar r attacks aga	es. Their presenceestal governments and NATO makera, suggestingtones and NATO and the second secon	targets ha specially ent buildi facilities esting pos and US tar	we been symmilitary and ngs. However are "propessible ideo gets. The	mbols of nd police ver, PKK s" to the logical PKK	
HULEUVEL - HIGGE	212 162611 01	n the PLO ar	id Armenia	n terrorisi	The	
and undertakes murder of US p that the "colo collaborators. listory of kio	s violence pu personnel in pnialist" reg . Iraqi Kurd Inapping and	the area co gime is not iswhom the sometimes k	ould make capable o PKK emul	the symboli f protectir atesalso	ic point ng its have a	
and undertakes murder of US p that the "colo collaborators. listory of kio	s violence pu personnel in pnialist" reg . Iraqi Kurd Inapping and	the area co gime is not iswhom the sometimes k	ould make capable o PKK emul	the symboli f protectir atesalso	ic point ng its have a	
and undertakes murder of US p that the "cold collaborators. nistory of kid oressure on th	s violence pu personnel in pnialist" reg . Iraqi Kurd Inapping and	the area co gime is not iswhom the sometimes k	ould make capable o PKK emul	the symboli f protectir atesalso	ic point ng its have a	
and undertakes murder of US p that the "colo collaborators. listory of kio	s violence pu personnel in pnialist" reg . Iraqi Kurd Inapping and	the area co gime is not iswhom the sometimes k	ould make capable o PKK emul	the symboli f protectir atesalso	ic point ng its have a	
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and undertakes nurder of US p that the "colo collaborators. listory of kio	s violence pu personnel in pnialist" reg . Iraqi Kurd Inapping and	the area co gime is not iswhom the sometimes k	ould make capable o PKK emul	the symboli f protectir atesalso	ic point ng its have a	
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	the	Turkish Gove	ernment is	concerned	at present	
3 L	rengthened:	and other Ki by Syrian ai	uraish orga nd libvan n	nizations	will be	4 a h
lai	rge-scale S	uneir own a Vrian and l	ims. Altho ibvan effort	ugh Turki t to sid	sh fears of	a
gov	vernments pi	unrealistic, rovide to In	, at least : ragi Kurdisi	some of t h and Pal	he aid the	two
SUC	ch as the Pi	uno to "tric KK. Libva c	ckle down" 1 or Svria mid	to small-	time groups	to
CHIC	E FAN LU ODE	erate agains targets in	st rival Pai	lestinian	, Israeli.	
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